

Productive Lands Healthy Environment

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) strategic plan describes the long-term goals of NRCS, the objectives we will help people achieve by 2010, and the strategies that we have adopted to ensure our efforts are effective.


Vision: Productive Lands – Healthy Environment

We envision a productive, sustainable agricultural sector in balance with a high-quality environment. Productive use of the Nation's cropland, grazing land, and forest land is essential to the Nation's security and the health and well-being of its citizens. These lands form the foundation of a vibrant agricultural economy that provides food, fiber, forest products, and energy for the Nation. These lands also produce environmental benefits that people need – clean and abundant water, clean air, and healthy ecosystems.


Mission: Helping People Help the Land

We provide products and services that enable people to be good stewards of their soil, water, and related natural resources. With our assistance, people are better able to conserve, maintain, or improve their natural resources.

Our six Mission Goals articulate the benefits that the Nation expects to derive from our activities and programs:

 **High Quality, Productive Soils** to enable sustained production of a safe, healthy, and abundant food supply.

Objective: Farmers will manage 70 percent of cropland under systems that maintain or improve soil condition and increase soil carbon.


 **Clean and Abundant Water** to protect human health, support a healthy environment, encourage a productive landscape, and ensure an abundant and reliable supply.

NRCS is a technical agency of the United States Department of Agriculture. The Agency was established in 1935 as the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) to carry out a continuing program of soil and water conservation. In 1994, NRCS was organized to combine the authorities of the former SCS as well as additional programs that provide financial assistance for natural resource conservation.

Most of the NRCS' 12,000 employees work in nearly 2,900 field offices across the Nation, providing services directly to our customers. These employees are supported by NRCS employees in other offices that provide technical and administrative support, conduct natural resource inventories, and develop new conservation technologies.


Objectives:

- Agricultural producers will reduce potential delivery of sediment and nutrients from their operations by 70 million tons.
- Conserve 8 million acre-feet of water.


 **Healthy Plant and Animal Communities** to provide habitats for diverse and healthy wildlife, aquatic species, and plant communities; protect water quality; and reduce flood damages.

Objectives:

- Farmers, ranchers, and private non-industrial forest owners will apply management techniques that will maintain or improve long-term vegetative conditions on 150 million acres of grazing and forest land.
- An additional 9 million acres of essential habitat will be improved and managed to benefit at-risk and declining species.
- Resource managers will create, restore, or enhance 1.5 million acres of wetlands on non-Federal lands.

 **Clean Air** to make a positive contribution to local air quality and the Nation's effort to sequester carbon.

Objective: To be established. The objective will be measured by tons of carbon sequestered.



Adequate Energy Supply to conserve energy and be a source of environmentally sustainable biofuels and renewable energy.

Objective: To be established. The objective will be measured by BTUs conserved.



Working Farm and Ranch Lands to sustain a viable agricultural sector and natural resource quality.

Objective: 70 percent of farms and ranches protected under easements will remain in active agriculture.

Overarching Strategies

To achieve our objectives efficiently and effectively, we will:

- Seek and promote cooperative conservation efforts to achieve conservation goals;
- Provide information and assistance to encourage and enable locally led, watershed-scale conservation; and
- Facilitate the growth of market-based opportunities that encourage business and industry to invest in conservation on private lands.

Management Initiatives

We will strive to meet our objectives by:

- Ensuring civil rights, equal employment opportunity, and fair and equitable service delivery; and
- Improving internal management by strategically managing human capital, making effective use of Internet-based technology, strengthening financial management controls, and continuing to integrate budget and performance.

Business Lines:

We fulfill our mission by providing technical and financial assistance to landowners and managers through our five business lines:

- Conservation planning and technical consultation,
- Conservation implementation,
- Natural resource inventory and assessment,
- Natural resource technology transfer, and
- Financial assistance.

Guiding Principles:

- Service – provide the highest quality service to all clientele equally,
- Partnership – bring traditional and non-traditional partners together to achieve common objectives, and
- Technical Excellence – deliver science-based information and technology to enable effective conservation stewardship.

Copies of Productive Lands – Healthy Environment are available at <http://landcare.sc.egov.usda.gov/>, by e-mailing landcare@usda.gov, or by calling 1-888-526-3227 (1-888-LANDCARE).

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or a part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

August 2006
PA-1893



United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Productive Lands Healthy Environment

Natural Resources Conservation Service
Strategic Plan 2005-2010
Overview

Helping People Help the Land